

**CONGRESSMAN SHERWOOD BOEHLERT (R-NY)**  
**OPENING STATEMENT FOR MARK-UP ON H.R. 5450**  
**June 14, 2006**

I want to welcome everyone today to this mark-up, and I'm going to keep my remarks brief because the bill we're marking up today is very important but not particularly controversial, and we've reported it out before.

Virtually every group that has looked at ocean issues has concluded that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) would be able to function better if it had a clear basis in law. And that's what this bill, a NOAA Organic Act, would provide. It would give this key science agency, which was created by Executive Order, a firm legal basis for its full range of activities and responsibilities. That's hard to argue with.

The bill, which was introduced by Dr. Ehlers, who has been its tireless champion, would also strengthen science at NOAA, which makes sense since NOAA is a major science agency.

We reported this bill out earlier as H.R. 50 and the only difference between the reported version of that bill and today's is language we negotiated with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The language makes clear that we are not intending to give NOAA any new authority in areas of concern to that Committee – such as new authority to build buildings or to issue new kinds of regulations.

So with that jurisdictional hurdle behind us, this bill should move forward. We will continue to work with the Resources Committee, which shares jurisdiction over NOAA, to bring the bill to the floor. The Resources Committee has also been on hold pending the resolution of the Transportation Committee issue.

I assume that most of our debate today will not be on the bill, but on the Miller amendment, and I'll hold my comments on that until we get to it.

I want to thank the Members on both sides of the aisle who have contributed to this bill, and I look forward to its passage.

Mr. Gordon.